

HENRY CABOT LODGE AND THEODORE ROOSEVELT

HERO TALES
 **FROM** 
AMERICAN
HISTORY

**INTRODUCTION BY U.S. SENATOR MITCH McCONNELL
AND GARY L. GREGG II**



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TO E. Y. R.

To you we owe the suggestion of writing this book. Its purpose, as you know better than any one else, is to tell in simple fashion the story of some Americans who showed that they knew how to live and how to die; who proved their truth by their endeavor; and who joined to the stern and manly qualities which are essential to the well-being of a masterful race the virtues of gentleness, of patriotism, and of lofty adherence to an ideal.

It is a good thing for all Americans, and it is an especially good thing for young Americans, to remember the men who have given their lives in war and peace to the service of their fellow-countrymen, and to keep in mind the feats of daring and personal prowess done in time past by some of the many champions of the nation in the various crises of her history. Thrift, industry, obedience to law, and intellectual cultivation are essential qualities in the makeup of any successful people; but no people can be really great unless they possess also the heroic virtues which are as needful in time of peace as in time of war, and as important in civil as in military life. As a civilized people we desire peace, but the only peace worth having is obtained by instant readiness to

fight when wronged—not by unwillingness or inability to fight at all. Intelligent foresight in preparation and known capacity to stand well in battle are the surest safeguards against war. America will cease to be a great nation whenever her young men cease to possess energy, daring, and endurance, as well as the wish and the power to fight the nation's foes. No citizen of a free state should wrong any man; but it is not enough merely to refrain from infringing on the rights of others; he must also be able and willing to stand up for his own rights and those of his country against all comers, and he must be ready at any time to do his full share in resisting either malice domestic or foreign levy.

HENRY CABOT LODGE.

THEODORE ROOSEVELT.

Washington, April 19, 1895.

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INTRODUCTION

Why hero tales?

Some of us think that heroes, like fairy tales, are only for small children or those who have not yet learned about the “real” world. Others have even told us heroes are unhealthy. Either way, we have all become a bit sheepish about talking of heroes and heroism in America today. Yet virtually every society in history has celebrated its heroes, raising great monuments to their memory; leaving markers along roads where they fell in battle; lavishing praise on them while they lived and creating grand tombs to house them in death. Here in America, it is no different. Almost every town has statues or buildings named after past leaders and monuments commemorating its native sons and daughters who died in battle. How often do we wonder, though, about these people who past generations thought worthy of being followed, remembered and revered?

Have you ever stopped to ask who the man on the horse in the town square was or why he was important? Have you ever paused to read the plaque on the wall of the building that explained its namesake? We have grand national monuments in America as well—the Washington Monument and the Lincoln Memorial, the

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Jefferson Memorial and Mount Rushmore come to mind. Do we ever stop to think about why we build them, or what purpose they serve? Whenever we walk around Washington, D.C., it seems we can't go more than a block or two in any direction without running into a memorial dedicated to a military hero or great civilian leader. Why?

Ultimately, what matters are the stories these monuments tell—stories of great individuals doing heroic things that inspire others to do the same. The stories of George Washington, the first hero in this book, inspired the great Kentucky Senator Henry Clay, whose life stories, in turn, inspired Abraham Lincoln, the last hero mentioned in this book. Likewise, Roman heroes like Cato the Younger and Cincinnatus, depicted in popular books and plays of his age, inspired Washington. The stories are what inspire; it is the story that lodges in the imagination of those who hear them, ready to be called up to spark new actions worthy of being called right—and maybe even heroic. That is why Henry Cabot Lodge and Teddy Roosevelt named this little book *Hero Tales from American History*, and that is why they wrote it in the first place.

In the pages that follow, you will read of bloodshed and violence, but you will also read of men risking their lives and fortunes for causes greater than themselves. You will read of men laying down their lives for others. You will read the tale of Daniel Boone and the founding of Kentucky. You will read how Kentucky's own

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Revolutionary War hero, George Rogers Clark, boldly walked—outnumbered—into an enemy camp and took it without bloodshed. You will read of ships stealthily taken and great battles that raged to change the course of history. You will read about individuals who performed courageous tasks that made America.

When this book was first published, America was only a bit over one hundred years old. Now that we have come more than another century down the road, how many more heroes have we produced? We have been through two great world wars and the Cold War. We have fought in the hot summer jungles and cold winter mountains of Asia. We are fighting now in what has been called a “War on Terror.” We have helped liberate people from tyranny, poverty, and hunger and have fought for civil rights. And countless acts of heroism have happened in little towns and big cities when someone quietly accepted the responsibility of serving others, even at great cost to self.

Roosevelt and Lodge primarily picked military heroes as their models. Those are the stories they enjoyed, but they are also the stories which they wanted young people in America to know and be influenced by. Not everyone will appreciate their choices, but no one can deny the importance military heroism has played in defending America and liberating parts of the world. Still, they are not the only heroes worthy of remembrance. As Lodge writes in his essay on the writer Francis Parkman, “Such qualities can be shown in many ways, and the field of

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battle is only one of the fields of human endeavor where heroism can be displayed.”

First published in 1895, there are also no heroines in this book. Many women performed heroic acts before this volume was published and many more since then. Each of us can find many people missing in these pages. That is why we have added a final section to this volume in which we hope you will take time to add heroes and heroines from your own reading and experiences. As Roosevelt and Lodge both knew, heroes and hero tales are essential to inspiring people to be strong, good, true, and courageous when their families, communities and country need them most. We would do well to add to the list that follows the heroes we have encountered or known of in our own lives.

* * *

Teddy Roosevelt and Henry Cabot Lodge were relatively young men with long careers ahead of them when they wrote *Hero Tales from American History*. Lodge was 45 and Roosevelt was 37. They had become friends in Washington, D.C., while Lodge was serving in Congress and Roosevelt was serving on the Civil Service Commission. They spent many hours after dinner talking of great men in American history until Roosevelt's wife suggested one evening that they write down the stories and share them with the country. The two men worked daily with one another on this book until Roosevelt left

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Washington in early 1895 to become Police Commissioner in New York City.

Both Lodge and Roosevelt wrote numerous books of history and biography during their careers. Lodge would go on to be one of the most important voices related to foreign policy in the early 20th century. He served in the Senate until his death in 1924. Roosevelt went on to live a life worthy of several hero tale entries of his own and served as the 26th president of United States from 1901–1909. His is one of four likenesses on that great wall of heroes we call Mount Rushmore. Neither would deny that the study and the memory of heroes helped to broaden their own horizons and served as models for what they themselves could achieve in life.

Why heroes? That's why.

U.S. SENATOR MITCH MCCONNELL.

GARY L. GREGG II.

Louisville, May 7, 2011.

DANIEL BOONE AND THE FOUNDING OF KENTUCKY

Daniel Boone will always occupy a unique place in our history as the archetype of the hunter and wilderness wanderer. He was a true pioneer, and stood at the head of that class of Indian-fighters, game-hunters, forest-fellers, and backwoods farmers who, generation after generation, pushed westward the border of civilization from the Alleghanies to the Pacific. As he himself said, he was “an instrument ordained of God to settle the wilderness.” Born in Pennsylvania, he drifted south into western North Carolina, and settled on what was then the extreme frontier. There he married, built a log cabin, and hunted, chopped trees, and tilled the ground like any other frontiersman. The Alleghany Mountains still marked a boundary beyond which the settlers dared not go; for west of them lay immense reaches of frowning forest, uninhabited save by bands of warlike Indians. Occasionally some venturesome hunter or trapper penetrated this immense wilderness, and returned with strange stories of what he had seen and done.

In 1769 Boone, excited by these vague and wondrous tales, determined himself to cross the mountains and find

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out what manner of land it was that lay beyond. With a few chosen companions he set out, making his own trail through the gloomy forest. After weeks of wandering, he at last emerged into the beautiful and fertile country of Kentucky, for which, in after years, the red men and the white strove with such obstinate fury that it grew to be called "the dark and bloody ground." But when Boone first saw it, it was a fair and smiling land of groves and glades and running waters, where the open forest grew tall and beautiful, and where innumerable herds of game grazed, roaming ceaselessly to and fro along the trails they had trodden during countless generations. Kentucky was not owned by any Indian tribe, and was visited only by wandering war-parties and hunting-parties who came from among the savage nations living north of the Ohio or south of the Tennessee.

A roving war-party stumbled upon one of Boone's companions and killed him, and the others then left Boone and journeyed home; but his brother came out to join him, and the two spent the winter together.

Self-reliant, fearless, and the frowning defiles of Cumberland Gap, they were attacked by Indians, and driven back—two of Boone's own sons being slain. In 1775, however, he made another attempt; and this attempt was successful. The Indians attacked the newcomers; but by this time the parties of would-be settlers were sufficiently numerous to hold their own. They beat back the Indians, and built rough little hamlets, surrounded by log

Daniel Boone and the Founding of Kentucky

stockades, at Boonesborough and Harrodsburg; and the permanent settlement of Kentucky had begun.

The next few years were passed by Boone amid unending Indian conflicts.

He was a leader among the settlers, both in peace and in war. At one time he represented them in the House of Burgesses of Virginia; at another time he was a member of the first little Kentucky parliament itself; and he became a colonel of the frontier militia. He tilled the land, and he chopped the trees himself; he helped to build the cabins and stockades with his own hands, wielding the longhandled, light-headed frontier ax as skilfully as other frontiersmen. His main business was that of surveyor, for his knowledge of the country, and his ability to travel through it, in spite of the danger from Indians, created much demand for his services among people who wished to lay off tracts of wild land for their own future use. But whatever he did, and wherever he went, he had to be sleeplessly on the lookout for his Indian foes. When he and his fellows tilled the stump-dotted fields of corn, one or more of the party were always on guard, with weapon at the ready, for fear of lurking savages. When he went to the House of Burgesses he carried his long rifle, and traversed roads not a mile of which was free from the danger of Indian attack. The settlements in the early years depended exclusively upon game for their meat, and Boone was the mightiest of all the hunters, so that upon him devolved the task of keeping his people supplied.

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He killed many buffaloes, and pickled the buffalo beef for use in winter. He killed great numbers of black bear, and made bacon of them, precisely as if they had been hogs. The common game were deer and elk. At that time none of the hunters of Kentucky would waste a shot on anything so small as a prairie-chicken or wild duck; but they sometimes killed geese and swans when they came south in winter and lit on the rivers.

But whenever Boone went into the woods after game, he had perpetually to keep watch lest he himself might be hunted in turn. He never lay in wait at a game-lick, save with ears strained to hear the approach of some crawling red foe. He never crept up to a turkey he heard calling, without exercising the utmost care to see that it was not an Indian; for one of the favorite devices of the Indians was to imitate the turkey call, and thus allure within range some inexperienced hunter.

Besides this warfare, which went on in the midst of his usual vocations, Boone frequently took the field on set expeditions against the savages.

Once when he and a party of other men were making salt at a lick, they were surprised and carried off by the Indians. The old hunter was a prisoner with them for some months, but finally made his escape and came home through the trackless woods as straight as the wild pigeon flies.

He was ever on the watch to ward off the Indian inroads, and to follow the warparties, and try to rescue the prisoners. Once his own daughter, and two other girls

Daniel Boone and the Founding of Kentucky

who were with her, were carried off by a band of Indians. Boone raised some friends and followed the trail steadily for two days and a night; then they came to where the Indians had killed a buffalo calf and were camped around it. Firing from a little distance, the whites shot two of the Indians, and, rushing in, rescued the girls.

On another occasion, when Boone had gone to visit a salt-lick with his brother, the Indians ambushed them and shot the latter. Boone himself escaped, but the Indians followed him for three miles by the aid of a tracking dog, until Boone turned, shot the dog, and then eluded his pursuers. In company with Simon Kenton and many other noted hunters and wilderness warriors, he once and again took part in expeditions into the Indian country, where they killed the braves and drove off the horses.

Twice bands of Indians, accompanied by French, Tory, and British partizans from Detroit, bearing the flag of Great Britain, attacked Boonesboroug. In each case Boone and his fellow-settlers beat them off with loss. At the fatal battle of the Blue Licks, in which two hundred of the best riflemen of Kentucky were beaten with terrible slaughter by a great force of Indians from the lakes, Boone commanded the left wing.

Leading his men, rifle in hand, he pushed back and overthrew the force against him; but meanwhile the Indians destroyed the right wing and center, and got round in his rear, so that there was nothing left for Boone's men except to flee with all possible speed.

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As Kentucky became settled, Boone grew restless and ill at ease.

He loved the wilderness; he loved the great forests and the great prairie-like glades, and the life in the little lonely cabin, where from the door he could see the deer come out into the clearing at nightfall.

The neighborhood of his own kind made him feel cramped and ill at ease.

So he moved ever westward with the frontier; and as Kentucky filled up he crossed the Mississippi and settled on the borders of the prairie country of Missouri, where the Spaniards, who ruled the territory, made him an alcalde, or judge. He lived to a great age, and died out on the border, a backwoods hunter to the last.

JOHN QUINCY ADAMS AND THE RIGHT OF PETITION

The lot of ex-Presidents of the United States, as a rule, has been a life of extreme retirement, but to this rule there is one marked exception. When John Quincy Adams left the White House in March, 1829, it must have seemed as if public life could hold nothing more for him.

He had had everything apparently that an American statesman could hope for. He had been Minister to Holland and Prussia, to Russia and England.

He had been a Senator of the United States, Secretary of State for eight years, and finally President. Yet, notwithstanding all this, the greatest part of his career, and his noblest service to his country, were still before him when he gave up the Presidency.

In the following year (1830) he was told that he might be elected to the House of Representatives, and the gentleman who made the proposition ventured to say that he thought an ex-President, by taking such a position, "instead of degrading the individual would elevate the representative character." Mr. Adams replied that he had "in that respect no scruples whatever. No person can

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be degraded by serving the people as Representative in Congress, nor, in my opinion, would an ex-President of the United States be degraded by serving as a selectman of his town if elected thereto by the people." A few weeks later he was chosen to the House, and the district continued to send him every two years from that time until his death. He did much excellent work in the House, and was conspicuous in more than one memorable scene; but here it is possible to touch on only a single point, where he came forward as the champion of a great principle, and fought a battle for the right which will always be remembered among the great deeds of American public men.

Soon after Mr. Adams took his seat in Congress, the movement for the abolition of slavery was begun by a few obscure agitators. It did not at first attract much attention, but as it went on it gradually exasperated the overbearing temper of the Southern slaveholders. One fruit of this agitation was the appearance of petitions for the abolition of slavery in the House of Representatives. A few were presented by Mr. Adams without attracting much notice; but as the petitions multiplied, the Southern representatives became aroused. They assailed Mr. Adams for presenting them, and finally passed what was known as the gag rule, which prevented the reception of these petitions by the House. Against this rule Mr. Adams protested, in the midst of the loud shouts of the Southerners, as a violation of his constitutional rights. But the tyranny of slavery at that time was so complete

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that the rule was adopted and enforced, and the slaveholders, undertook in this way to suppress free speech in the House, just as they also undertook to prevent the transmission through the mails of any writings adverse to slavery. With the wisdom of a statesman and a man of affairs, Mr. Adams addressed himself to the one practical point of the contest. He did not enter upon a discussion of slavery or of its abolition, but turned his whole force toward the vindication of the right of petition. On every petition day he would offer, in constantly increasing numbers, petitions which came to him from all parts of the country for the abolition of slavery, in this way driving the Southern representatives almost to madness, despite their rule which prevented the reception of such documents when offered. Their hatred of Mr. Adams is something difficult to conceive, and they were burning to break him down, and, if possible, drive him from the House. On February 6, 1837, after presenting the usual petitions, Mr. Adams offered one upon which he said he should like the judgment of the Speaker as to its propriety, inasmuch as it was a petition from slaves. In a moment the House was in a tumult, and loud cries of "Expel him!" "Expel him!" rose in all directions. One resolution after another was offered looking toward his expulsion or censure, and it was not until February 9, three days later, that he was able to take the floor in his own defense. His speech was a masterpiece of argument, invective, and sarcasm. He showed, among other things, that he had not offered the petition, but had only asked

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the opinion of the Speaker upon it, and that the petition itself prayed that slavery should not be abolished. When he closed his speech, which was quite as savage as any made against him, and infinitely abler, no one desired to reply, and the idea of censuring him was dropped.

The greatest struggle, however, came five years later, when, on January 21, 1842, Mr. Adams presented the petition of certain citizens of Haverhill, Massachusetts, praying for the dissolution of the Union on account of slavery. His enemies felt that now, at last, he had delivered himself into their hands. Again arose the cry for his expulsion, and again vituperation was poured out upon him, and resolutions to expel him freely introduced. When he got the floor to speak in his own defense, he faced an excited House, almost unanimously hostile to him, and possessing, as he well knew, both the will and the power to drive him from its walls. But there was no wavering in Mr. Adams. "If they say they will try me," he said, "they must try me. If they say they will punish me, they must punish me. But if they say that in peace and mercy they will spare me expulsion, I disdain and cast away their mercy, and I ask if they will come to such a trial and expel me. I defy them. I have constituents to go to, and they will have something to say if this House expels me, nor will it be long before the gentlemen will see me here again." The fight went on for nearly a fortnight, and on February 7 the whole subject was finally laid on the table. The sturdy, dogged fighter, single-handed and alone, had beaten all the forces of the South and of

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slavery. No more memorable fight has ever been made by one man in a parliamentary body, and after this decisive struggle the tide began to turn. Every year Mr. Adams renewed his motion to strike out the gag rule, and forced it to a vote. Gradually the majority against it dwindled, until at last, on December 3, 1844, his motion prevailed. Freedom of speech had been vindicated in the American House of Representatives, the right of petition had been won, and the first great blow against the slave power had been struck.

Four years later Mr. Adams fell, stricken with paralysis, at his place in the House, and a few hours afterward, with the words, "This is the last of earth; I am content," upon his lips, he sank into unconsciousness and died. It was a fit end to a great public career. His fight for the right of petition is one to be studied and remembered, and Mr. Adams made it practically alone. The slaveholders of the South and the representatives of the North were alike against him. Against him, too, as his biographer, Mr. Morse, says, was the class in Boston to which he naturally belonged by birth and education. He had to encounter the bitter resistance in his own set of the "conscienceless respectability of wealth," but the great body of the New England people were with him, as were the voters of his own district. He was an old man, with the physical infirmities of age. His eyes were weak and streaming; his hands were trembling; his voice cracked in moments of excitement; yet in that age of oratory, in the days of Webster and Clay, he was

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known as the “old man eloquent.” It was what he said, more than the way he said it, which told. His vigorous mind never worked more surely and clearly than when he stood alone in the midst of an angry House, the target of their hatred and abuse. His arguments were strong, and his large knowledge and wide experience supplied him with every weapon for defense and attack. Beneath the lash of his invective and his sarcasm the hottest of the slaveholders cowered away. He set his back against a great principle. He never retreated an inch, he never yielded, he never conciliated, he was always an assailant, and no man and no body of men had the power to turn him. He had his dark hours, he felt bitterly the isolation of his position, but he never swerved. He had good right to set down in his diary, when the gag rule was repealed, “Blessed, forever blessed, be the name of God.”